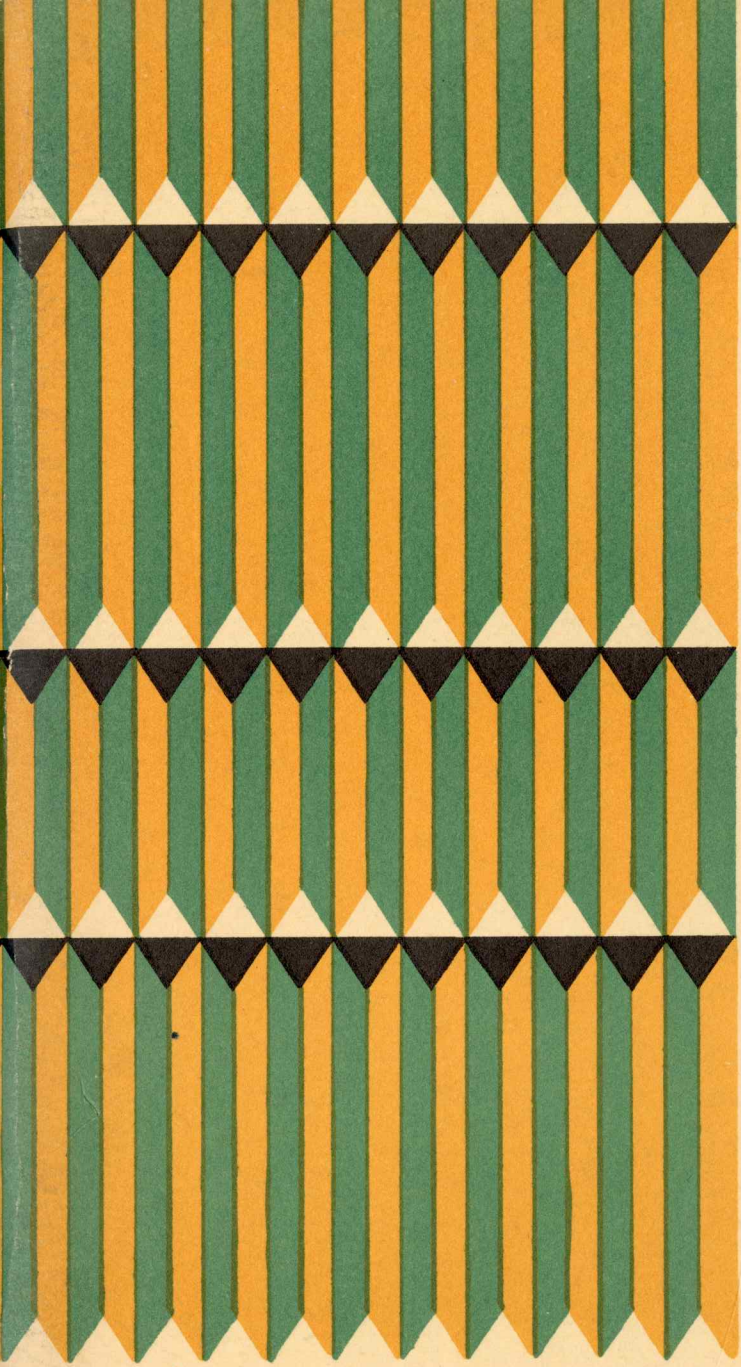

# prism

SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS COLLEGE 1957

# prism

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# prism

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PETER DYCE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

for

**CANADA**

and her

cultural future

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EDMUND FANCOTT

# PERSPECTIVE

*A few years more than a century ago the "little magazine" was born. The first was named* THE GERM (1850), *an appropriate name because there was a long period of gestation before the "little magazine" burst upon the literary world with the full vigour of lusty and rebellious youth in the twenties.*

*It has passed through many cycles of change and it is fitting that its history should be reviewed at a time when the mantle of creative experiment is tossed without by-your-leave at the college magazines.*

*The "little magazine" has been defined as "a periodical whose aim is the promotion of literary experiment and reform and the encouragement of obscure and hitherto unpublished authors, frequently in accordance with a definite editorial viewpoint in the matter of aesthetics or poltics, rather than high sales and financial profits."*

*The editorial content is the distillation of acid and often violent editorial discussion, of uncompromising honesty and creative sincerity combined with full awareness that the printed result will be judged similar conditions by critics of contemporary and older literary generations, without mercy and yet with an awareness that somewhere in little magazines the next generation of writers is being seeded.*

*There was a flurry of vitality in the nineties. The YELLOW BOOK appeared heralding the decadence of Aubrey Beardsley and the satire of Max Beerbohm. Faded as it now seems the YELLOW BOOK shocked its generation, and Gilbert and Sullivan mocked it in "Patience" wth the "ultra-poetical, super-aesthetical, out-of-the-way young man." In America the YELLOW BOOK had more serious contemporaries in THE BIBELOT and THE CHAP-BOOK.*

*But these were only the first stirrings, the ground-swell of a rebellion which broke out in America immediately precedng and following World War* 1. *It was a wonderful time for rebellion; there were so many carts waiting to be kicked over; philistinism, jingoism, the machine; the Victorians, the Edwardians, the Georgians; the Anglo-American literary tradition and all fixed poetic forms.*

*It was a magnificent rebellion led by POETRY (the sole survivor), THE LITTLE REVIEW, THE SEVEN ARTS, THE DIAL and many other little magazines and echoed in England by THE BLUE REVIEW, SIGNATURE, THE CRITERION and others.*

*The roster of writers who were first known through these magazines and later ones is a literary Who's-Who of the first half of the twentieth century; Katherine Mansfield, Edgar Lee Masters, Sherwood Anderson, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, E. E. Cummings, Hart Crane, William Faulkner, Erskine Caldwell, Edmund Wilson, Dylan Thomas; and this list does not exhaust even the familiar names.*

*The twenties was the great decade of rebellion. The tough school carved its place with ruthless skill; but there was also the new realism of meticulous craftsmanship, Katherine Mansfield, Edmund Wilson, Thornton Wilder; the iconoclastic imagery of T. S. Eliot, Pound and Cummings; the stream of consciousness emerging with James Joyce and Gertrude Stein.*

*By the beginning of the thirties the rebellion had passed full flower and its little magazines withered on the stem; but a new generaton of the avant-garde was thrusting up. TAMBOUR, an international magazine, proclaimed its manifesto from Paris.*

*Parenthesis.*
*Smashing dishes,*
*Crash of washing,*
*Household garbage.*
*Blows.*

*Parenthesis.*

*Light, darkness,*
*Form, anti-form?*
*Idea, thought, expression,*
*Essentials* 1930.
*Period.*

*The tough school was now respectable; the decade of social protest had begun. In America Erskine Caldwell and William Faulkner and the poor south emerged; THE HOUND AND HORN, THE SYMPOSIUM, STORY and other little magazine dipped their fingers into the squalor of the depression and most of them died quickly. In Paris TAMBOUR, BRAVO, THE INTERNATIONAL MODERN QUARTERLY and BIFUR made the avant-garde international. The contributors to BIFUR made strange bedfellows; Ilya Ehrenburg, Hemingway, Buster Keaton, Andre Malraux, William Carlos Wiliams, Ghopa Mukerji, Eugene O'Neill, Giorgio de Chirico. But name-chasing was its doom.*

*In England little magazines sparked and died; SCRUTINY, NEW VERSE, NEW SIGNATURES, SEVEN, KINGDOM COME; but names like Auden, Spender, Day Lewis, McNiece rose through them. There were no more literary apple carts to kick over but there were plenty waiting in society and politics. In America FURIOSO, CHIMERA, WAKE and others, fluttered and expired. The decade was a good seed bed for writers and poets but not for little magazines. The troubles of the decade were too vivid; Hitler, Mussolini, Moscow purges, Spanish war, Guernica; all set against the background of the great depression and the shadow of the world war.*

*By the end of the thirties social protest was too weak against the tide of events and war was a brutal climactic. The avant-garde turned inward to intimate human relations and the meaning of*

*things — "Death shall have no dominion . . ." and "I saw my scattered hopes upon the floor, and with them played a horned girl . . ."*

*The New Romantics rose in England and the American poets turned to look for beauty and truth.*

*HORIZON leapt to international influence under Cyril Connolly and Tambimuttu's POETRY LONDON stirred English poetry vigorously for a few years. Lehman's NEW WRITING and Alex Comfort's POETRY FOLIOS tried to set theme for the decade but in the forties something happened to the little magazine. The time when individual editors could carry the necessary enthusiasm and face the mounting costs of production had passed. Something had also happened to the avant-garde.*

*The ferment in poetry, in the novel, in criticism that had reached its high point in the twenties had subsided. The experiments and innovations that had forged a new poetry and criticism were no longer received with the tremor of excitement and discovery as they were by the readers of THE DIAL or THE LITTLE REVIEW. The avant-garde had become respectable elders, the poet-professors. They could no longer condemn institutions or middle-class existence. They could no longer shout for free verse, free love, free wine. They could murmur in despair but not raise their voices. The voices of the leading young poets Richard Wilbur, Robert Lowell, Theodore Roethke, Howard Nemerov are restrained. Their concern is with the aesthetics of poetry rather than rebellion."*

*The leading literary reviews, respectable relatives of the little magazines, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, THE YALE REVIEW, KENYON REVIEW, QUEEN'S QUARTERLY and others are published by universities and their editors are professors.*

*But perhaps it is a mistake to judge the sea by what earlier tides have left high and dry on the beach.*

*The little magazine was dead but it had been murdered by two factors of the late forties, the hight costs of production and a political climate in which all individuality, eccentricity and originality were subversive.*

*The little magazine was dead but no sooner had it died than it was resurrected in a new form. The mass circulation of the paper books offered the security of a circulation in hundreds of thousands in place of a few thousand. NEW AMERICAN POETRY, DISCOVERY, NEW WORLD WRITING were immediately successful. They had the vigour and the adventure of the early little magazines. But their doom was in their success. They were spouts too small for the pressure of new writers; their editors were too small a sieve to sift a generation; their published contributors too few to trap the tenor of the times.*

*So the little magazine has come back where it belongs, to the college magazines. Their circulation is small but there are hundreds of them, spanning the continents, fragile links of a strong chain linking student bodies everywhere. They are edited by student boards whose outlook is international as never before, boards that argue and discuss and challenge and select as critically and vigorously as any of their forbears, boards who look at their own generation and not as the past, boards that change each year.*

*Each magazine is a small pool but, altogether, the editors of all the college magazines cast a net over a whole generation. Some of the fish they catch are small but among them are those that will grow big.*

*There should be more exchange of college magazines and every common room should have them all, because the lure of the little magazine lies in the inevitability that through its pages there emerges the tone of the literary future. Our decade has been termed the age of confusion and the age of anxiety but it might be a new age of ferment and we shall not know until a decade or so hence we can look back on the little magazines of today.*

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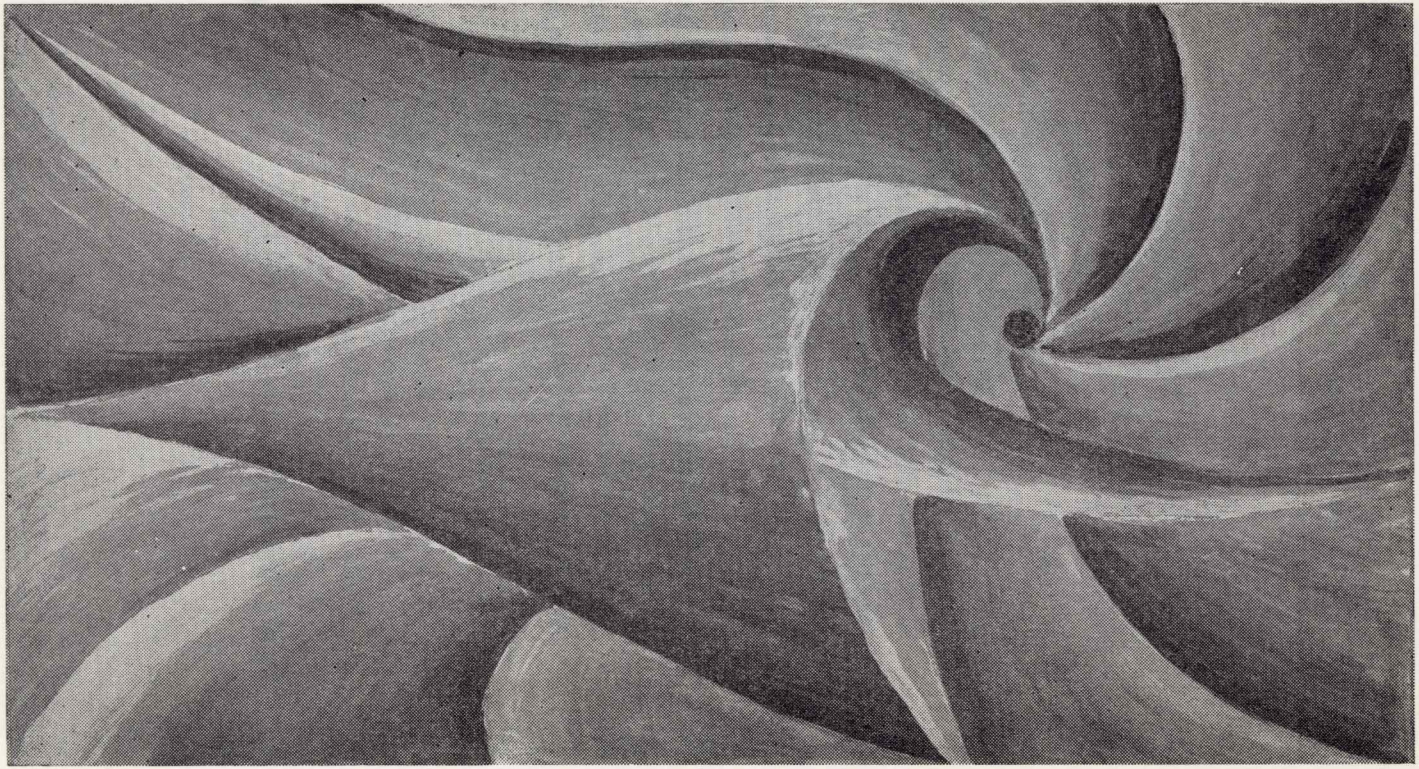


P. EZIAR

# INSPIRATION

chaos of intermingled thoughts
is pierced by passive experience
        The search
fights off the strained laughs, and tired belches
of this world,
while spasmodic ideas reach toward
freshly plowed mouldings
many times they crumble
till the satisfied one takes hold.
opaqueness is scraped away
and when the remains are carelessly filed
    . . . . . the anxious pen is relieved . . . . .

JOHN MILLONS

# GRAY WIND

Rain rushes from gray sky
along dark gutterways and into street drains
leaves heavy humid air untouched
Scurrying peasants shield their heads
from the outside wetness
in futile haste of work-eat-play-sleep-work
Lost drops
drowned in the mocking cesspool of creation
And the bastard poet sings his something song
of fresh green fields and happy dandelions

TREVOR GOODGER-HILL

# FRIDAY NIGHT SUPPER

Freema
we
        sterile for nine years
across your tablier
still attack
and counter-attack
while your bright hair
grows white
over the hot stove.
Perhaps the heat
will soon spark our home
your flesh to mine
or by default
must I again
take the game ?

TEVIA ABRAMOVITCH

# JULY ON BAFFIN ISLAND

Slumber-still beneath taut canvas
house clocks mock synchronic breath-
and exhale minutes
meaning stripped . . .
Night - a dark hour; but
here no welcome shroud
on misty earth-turned crater barren . . .
Sleep, sinewy labor-men !
fool-golden dawn beckons;
while tonight between vaporous, perfumed thighs
many hard-bitten bodies find brief release
for another tomorrow.
Sleep, while my pen breathes life
into the frozen fibres of your souls.

P. EZIAR

# SAND IN MY SHOES

the office building
five o'clock shadowed
arms folded
looks down
to the figure
turtle-like
head bent, collar raised
the all-pregnating wind.
and stiff oaks creak
tail lights reflect their anger
wheels whirl and scream
impatience.
curious necks veer
to follow the ominous
crimson wail
imagination
and
they plod on
determined.
but stop.
through the pane
girdled in black
the Sister pouts
at self-same
reflection

the guilty hand reaches for
lip-red
and embryonic tears
freeze
wary soles seek sand to tred upon
and cracked lips . . . stretch
for in the distance
stick in hand
he comes
swishing layer after layer
to coat the paths
and feet
twitching with delight
strain
to greet him.

V.B.

# THREE PSYCHOLOGICAL POEMS

## CYNOSURE

Wait-let me on the stage
Just for a sec: I'd like to express myself
    Let me yell at Them
    The loud words that clog my soul
After which, in their polite applause
I'll walk off again, fresh and free.

## EPICURE

Say Bud, wattaya say I open up your soul
And pick around at your Ego ?
    Ha ! In no time I'd find out you're just like the rest:
    Chicken ! No guts ! - All talk and act.
Just like the rest !
. . . and me

## SINECURE

I read too much
Then gazed too long in the glass
    Then I talked too much
    to try to catch up ! and found
Myself out of breath
And my Ideal far, too far, up ahead.

JOHN MILLONS

# OPUS 12

Gray lady of the wraithe-like mist
Stand shrouded in the niche
Of comfort
While cold dampness
Eats into the bones
Of vagrant souls
Who shudder past
And the malnutrited flower seller
In her sacking skirt
Reverently bends the knee
And shivers
As she places fresh pansies
In your cold, cold hands.

Wm. H. RICE

## DECEMBER, 1956

In Raleigh, N.C.
Leaves
finely arched
Rustle on the sidewalk
Where long houses line
In easy well worn rows.
Where wit recalls some
Happy laughter
And pending Christmas
Still brings Santa
Into children's minds.
In New York
Christmas
goes warmly,
Secretly, in cocktail bars.
Appropriate carols are heard
Courtesy of MUSAK
(Carefully arranged for background)
The clink of toasts are sleigh bells
And dancing horses canter now on bottle labels.
Here
the Christmas white
Is my hotel rug.
The conception we celebrate
Is enacted there . .
To end the affair
We will play the game until Tues.,
For what we choose is possible.
(Not real ? No, not real, relative
but satisfactory).
Could we but be the child again
We could find a long house,
And love for Christmas.

SKARLET

# REFLEX

At once this city of limelight and dusk

Bivouac of sonorous harlequins

Irresolute freshly painted bairns

Faithless nubiles masklike and mellow

Transforms into a spectre of flagrant flash

Green, slightly red, and yellow.

Symmetrical site of avenues and corners

Does not pierce the eye

Cosmic light, salutary former

In expectation reflects on patience and time.

D. P. KRASLAVSKY

# ELEGY

Mud, my friend, too little,
In the hot springs I met you
Caked in warming slime
Burbling with your vapours
Rising with the gases coloured.
You are the motor and the wheel
The spasms
The silence of an empty bed.

And in the winter still
Snakelike you vanished
Whistling with the wind
Beneath the city walls.

Too many season's rains
Will kiss that mud belittled
And relatives will plant anew
The blossoms on your surface.
Mud, my friend, is all
Mud too little
And in the winter sometimes snow.

# art

JACQUELINE BROWNE

# CANADIAN ART

*"From where do we come, what are we, where are we going?"*
*—Gauguin*

If we are to attempt to determine the future of Canadian art, we must consider the past and its relationship to the present. Now —before the World Fair of 1958 and after the first great sweep of abstract art across the Continent (which has perhaps confused our outlook), is the time for a re-evaluation.

*From where do we come . . . . . ?*

Originally, our painting had one main source — Europe. With the founding of what has become Canada, France sent as well as governors, bishops and settlers, her 17th century baroque style. This she entrusted to artists and craftsmen who applied that knowledge to create opulence and old world richness in obvious contrast to the comparatively bleak reality and ruggedness of the Canadian landscape. Purely functional and religiously decorative; thus painting remained with the exception of a few uncommissioned informal portraits done by priests like Frère Luc, until 1760.

In 1760, with the appearance of British garrisons and English landscapes, French baroque fell out of good taste. Canada's new mistress demanded a complete report of her freshly-acquired protegée. Surveys were at once planned. Some of these military reporters such as Henry James Warre, were also soldier-artists. But in these illustrative works, the ruggedness, the clearness of outline, the sharpness of contour, inherent in Canada's structure, was prettily misted with English atmosphere, and delicately sketched with lines as fragile as English tatting.

Even with the growing desire for art in the Maritimes and Upper Canada, and the existing demand in Quebec, repetition instead of development occured. Except for a subtle suggestion of what was to come, in the freshness of Paul Kane and the coulourful good humour of Cornelius Kreighoff, there was as yet no link to the present, no indication to join where we came from with what we are.

By Confederation, both the general Canadian scene and the art scene were vigorously active. Canada had become a nation. What of a national art? Artists of those years must have realized that as a country grows, the expression of herself through culture, also grows. But culture needs support, and the young government first gave it by instituting the Royal Canadian Academy in 1880. Exhibitions, art schools and art catalogues furthered the endeavour. But there was still the irresistable beckoning of Europe. Many a prospective founder of a truly Canadian art was drawn into the maelstrom of European ideas and technique, through which he would try futilely to express his native land upon recrossing the Atlantic. The time was yet at least a decade distant when Canada would express her uniqueness through the medium of painting.

At the turn of the century, a link, a natural phenomonon which occured in Paris; Impressionism. Only a city so established, so sophisticated, could have embraced such a movement and still retained her former qualities. And conversely, only a trend of such dynamism and promise as Impressionism could have commanded painters the world over to desert the technique of the dark past and dedicate their canvasses to a moment of life, expressed in glowing light, and breathing of atmosphere. Canadian painters were acutely interested in the movement and, realizing the impetus that Paris had given them, applied the new principles to their own work.

With intensity of feeling Cullen, Suzor-Coté and Morrice interpreted their homeland through Impressionism. With equal intensity, the public either protested or remained indifferent to their work. But the climax of the Canadian version of this recurring controversy was resolved by an external factor — the First World War.

The government recognized its painters by commissioning some to follow the allied armies and record on canvas what they saw and felt. Provincial governments also took action which culminated in a rash of new art schools, art education institutes and sponsored exhibitions. The names of James Morrice, Suzor-Coté and Emily Carr became more familiar.

*What are we.....?*

European technique had prevented any native expression of true Canadiana. But with the upsurge of nationalism before and during the First World War, a similar desire for maturity was becoming evident in our art. The Academy style was rejected as being too limited by painters who needed a stronger means of expressing a proud love for their country. The time for emancipation from an unsatisfactory tradition had arrived and the Group of Seven was born.

The Group of Seven founded the first national art movement by painting our country in an internally discovered technique. The group comprised seven artists from Toronto, mainly engaged in commercial art, The members of the group, who were able to retreat to the Ontario northland on weekends, were J. E. H. MacDonald, Arthur Lismer, Lauren Harris, Frank Carmichael, A. J. Jackson, Frank Johnson and F. H. Varley. These men felt Canada's hardness, optimism and strength and reproduced her in bold pattern and stong colour. In their work an underlying rhythm could be found in the structure, strong hue and sharp contour set the mood, and pieces of Canada were forced into a few square feet or yards of canvas.

A retrospection of the progress between the two world wars reveals these years as a period in which the spirit of experiment was dominant. Rapid as development was, a high standard was maintained, and from this integrity the abstract art of the present received its impetus. Specialization now set in, and regionalism (painting the inherent beauty of specific locales), and expressionism (distorting the form to achieve an emotional or aesthetic effect) were the two leading categories into which styles fell. Abstract art was forming, which, added to the ways of painting experience of life or imaginative subjects, gave variety of outlook. Emily Carr and Goodridge Roberts painted landscape, Jack Nichols and Jacques de Tonnancour favoured figures, Pellan was the master of still life, while David Milne, Borduas, Harris and Marion Scott began painting the world of fantasy. Abstraction from natural forms had arisen on the west coast which was later to find its culmination in Gordon Smith, and a humanistic abstraction revealed itself in Joe Plaskett.

*Where are we going.....?*

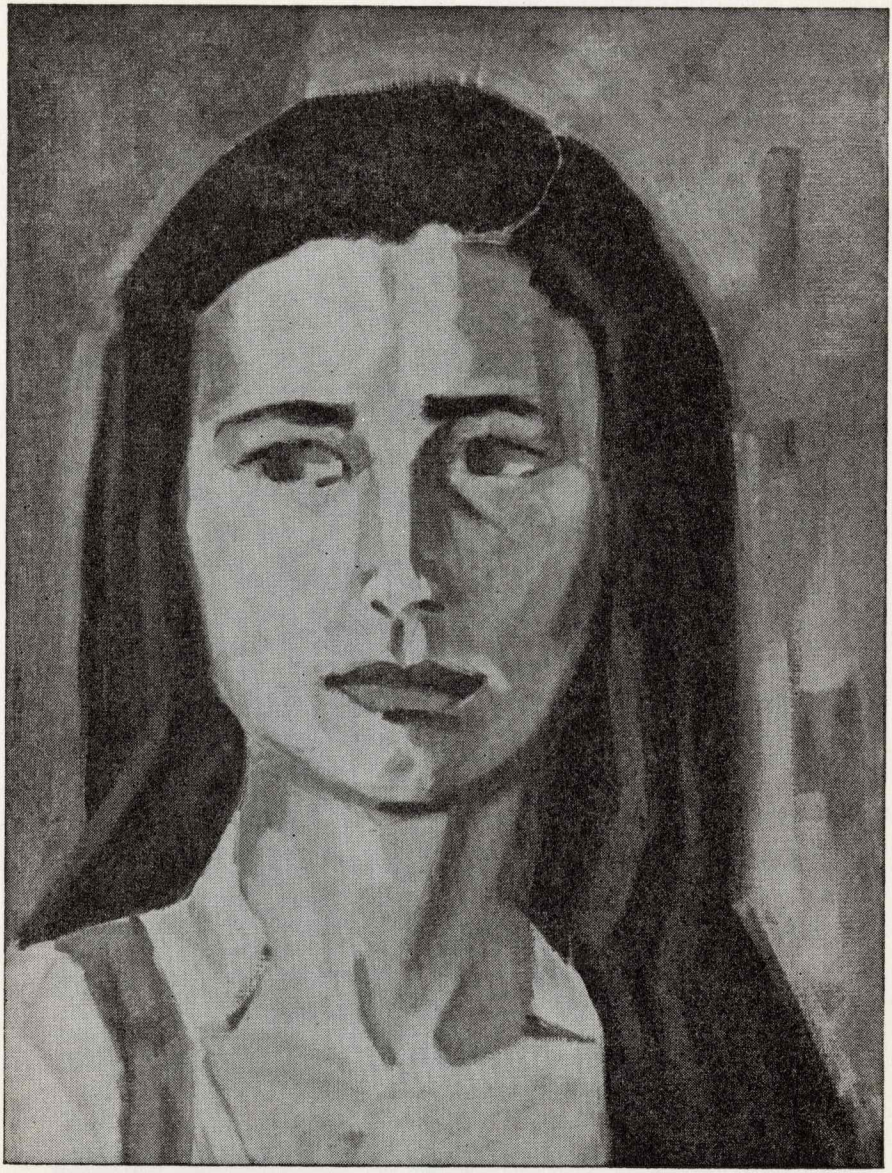
Painting began to foretell of the future. Canadian avant-garde artists began their careers in the forties as evidenced in the non-representational efforts of Quebec's Borduas, Riopelle and Leduc. The Montreal group, "Les Automatistes" appeared and dissolved, but its members continued individually towards abstract expressionism which reigns today.

The recent exhibition in Montreal of thirty-five living painters was a direct prophesy, rather than a retrospection or a statement of the present. To viewers who did not look deeply and thereby misunderstood the show, it must seem that our artists have denied the world of reality in repulsion to the methods of the age of analysis, hope and concreteness and resorted to expressing weak images of the inner mind. They might readily believe that the exhibition was proof of the fact that the worship of an absolute has degenerated into the worship of man, and since art is no longer a seeking after the eternal, that clever composition, interesting paint quality, and enigmatical mood have become of prime importance. But art cannot thrive on such weak nourishment, and those who condemn contemporary artists for these reasons may be assured that the artist still seeks to represent the eternal in his work, and that what he accomplishes is the direct result of observation, inspiration and expression.

Where is Canada going? The regionalism of a decade has served its purpose and Canada has made herself known. We now express ourselves through an abstract art, the future of which is open, and the structure of which is identical with the structure of our nation: a basic form which through evolution is well based, real and allows further development. We are well prepared to participate in world art, for we have found ourselves.

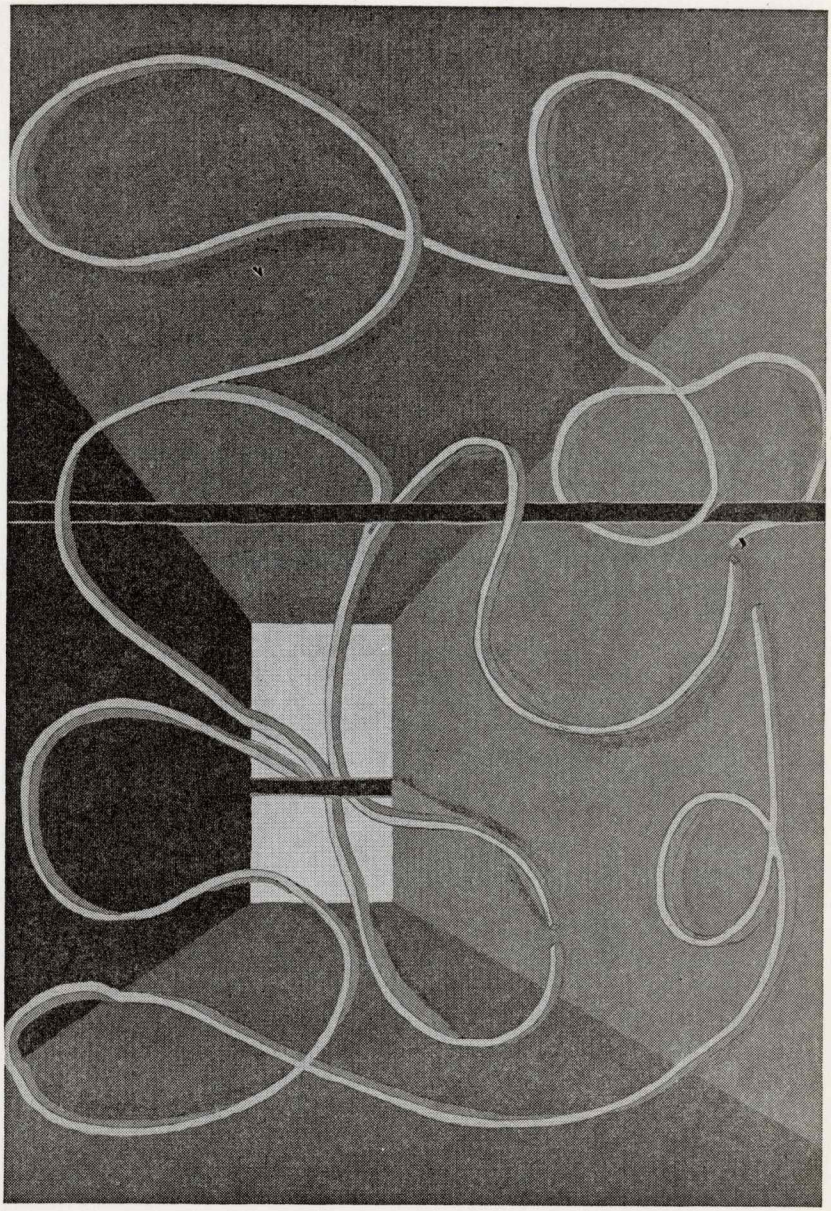
# AFTERTHOUGHTS

CLAUDETTE GAGNON



# ARTICULATION

HAROLD LAWRENCE



# NUDE

SONIA HISCHYNSKY

THE ART WORK SHOWN

WAS DONE BY STUDENTS

OF THE

SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS

COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF ART

# prose

ATMAN

# LAMENT FOR A WRITER

In a certain city, hidden among the tombstones and rubble of marble and concrete, there within the matrix of asphalt patterns and weavings of doors and rooms, a young man, a writer, with a burning inner fire of roses sits and stares into the gulf of a vision. The punch of earnestness is from the staccato of the machine his fingers flay; the type spells out the cold steel of passion.

Yet in that certain earnestness, when the room becomes like the myriad facet of a fly's eye, the shape of a vase on the dresser assumes the vague uncertainty that was mother. For here in the monstrosity of the troubled room where the shoulders sag in the enormity of dreams, the mechanical flagellations are but the syncopations of the past. And even within the engulfing vision the withered starkness of hungry tongues sucks deep and long at the flow of flesh and roses. Hidden in the shape of the vase, hollow in the tunnel of dreams, the wry wisteria of echoing voices partakes of the languid language of the flesh:

—James . . . if only the skies are grey for you today, but the day is bright and shining. Ah, if it were only an ashen day, then I could weep with ashen tears. But there, here are your shirts and your underthings. And, dear, you must take care. Ah, my son, if only . . .

—Yes, mother. May I kiss you.

(Then the fierce tears containing, I shall hold you, ever in the grasp of things, unyielding.)

**My Beloved holds me in the vale of surrender, the tumult thunders in my ear. But the flashes of the flesh are a compromise, and I cower in the vise of my being. Withold me now, regard me**

**now, impale with your Love. I whimper in the twinge of conscience, a sea of sighs escapes me.**

The suffusions of wisteria wreaths are incensed scents to leavened thoughts dripping from the frosted walls of the room where metallic words are spelled. The young man, the writer, in a frigid mechanical fury arrays the units of sleep distilled essence lubricated by existence to fruction of commas, words, symbols, curses, and colons.

And through the night, the long drawn thirsty night, the leaden air is rent by clacking punctuations and gushes from a drying heart, until the cock-crow hour on the shoulders of dawn splinters the room with slivers of light and splashes the east with the red of roses, mocking the halleluiah of the longing night.

Where are the psalms, the paens of praises? Where are the fiendish joys of art? In the further surrender with silence, the uneasy eye greets the uneasy light: the being shudders in apprehension. And now the instrument of insolence shattering the quicksilver spells out the graceless insouciance:

> In times of departing the world has no ills to be contained, to be interred: it is always the remnants, the flowers of a shape, wilted in the dry air of arid games. Perhaps, because the charnelled ashes lead to an endlessly soft shift of whispers in the room, leaving as ever an ordoured remain, the flowers of the departed are lovelier in images of dried, wasted vases.
>
> Never in the bridge of sun and days, the acts rampant in the wish-filled-wells of undoings fulfill the anguish of remembered life: always, as a tenured love, the dreams of the departed, ashen the ways, leaving a smoky whisper. Never, then, the flowered vision to light the shames, to enshrine the odored dust of offerings left in the room of forgotten uses for vases.

In the containment of the dawn-shouldered air, a young man, the writer, shivers on the pale thrusts of his flayings; he shudders in the blanket enormity of his monstrous room. The senile stench of truth seeps through the flowered pattern of the walls.

In the wandering damnation that is man irrevocably alone, the hallucinations of the self are cottons of images, dry and choking. Alone then, in a crevice of existence, shaped by a silver of sunlight, the frame of a being is wrenched, stretched and racked. Where the jackal cries are clothed of filth and sloth in the wretchings of the twisted mouth, the flight is the route for hopes in a sleep.

P. FREI

# MANDEVILLE—A STUDY

Bernard Mandeville, a man of the eighteenth century was concerned with the problem of moral values, both personal and social. He was an outgrowth of a whole spectrum of ideas which existed at his time. On the orthodox side of revealed religion were the ascetic Christians; in the middle were those men of polish and learning, like Shaftesbury, who believd in the inherent essential goodness of man. On the other extreme were relativists like Hobbes and empiricists like Locke. Mandeville was a combination of the two extremes, a man who officially acknowledged the ascetic standards of Christianity, but denied their practicability in society, on arguments similar to Hobbes and Locke.

The son of a Dutch doctor, Mandeville himself studied medicine. His special interests in the medical field were "hypochondriac and hysteric passions and diseases" on which he wrote his thesis at Leyden. After completing his studies, he travelled abroad. When he came to London, to learn the language, he liked it so much that he stayed. Later in his life he spoke English so perfectly that few believed that he was actually from Holland. Eventually he married an English girl, had a son and daughter, and as far as is known remained in the country for the rest of his life.

The first literary attempt published by Mandeville was a poem, "The Grumbling Hive", subtitled "Private vices, public benefits." The first edition created little reaction. But a later publication roused a storm of criticisms, protests and accusations. As a result Mandeville added a series of remarks to the poem, explaining his intentions. Later he added three essays, an attack on Charity Schools, a study of the nature of society and a consideration of the origins of moral

values. These, with a series of dialogues similar in content to the remarks, were collected and finally published under the name of "The Fable of the Bees." This collection, revised and rewritten over a period of years, is all that he ever published.

In the introduction to "The Grumbling Hive", Mandeville states: "For the main design of the fable is to show the impossibility of enjoying all the most elegant comforts of life that are to be met with in an industrious, wealthy and powerful nation and at the same time be bless'd with all the virtue and innocence that can be wish'd for in a Golden Age". This design he expands over the years into the whole Fable, searching into the various aspects of it in human life.

In this first poem he simply points out by examples the actual qualities of different professions and vices as he sees them. To him a lawyer is a hunter for loopholes to let the guilty through, a physician a hypocrite who heals through good name and pretended knowledges, a priest a slothful individual full of avarice and pride, and a soldier simply a man to be bribed. On the other hand the evils produce good results. Avarice leads to prodigality and therefore creates a demand for goods, luxury provides employment for the poor as does pride, since both consist of buying things either for pleasure or show. Vanity acts similarly, since it provides industry with demand, and induces ingenuity in the manufacturers. But if all society became eminently moral, all the industry would vanish. Lawyers would be unnecessary since debt would be paid and no crimes done; doctors would treat only a fraction of their patients, since they would be honest and refuse to suck money from healthy people; and priests would become half saints with almost no wants. Luxury would vanish, and general unemployment would result, since palaces would not be built, amusement places closed, fashions static. The result would be a poor society, or, as Mandeville says, the hive would win a psychic victory and retire in content and poverty to a hollow tree.

From the picture above Mandeville draws the following moral.

"Without great vices, is a vain

Eutopia seated in the brain."

"So vice is beneficial found

when it's by justice lopt and bound"

In the remarks on "The Grumbling Hive" Mandeville treats

different human values in a random manner, with a great number of diversions into reminiscences of places he had seen. He defines, for example, honor as good opinion of others, shame as fear of the opinion of others, modesty as a matter of education and fashion and marriage as a hypocritical satisfaction of lust. Love to him is the carnal pleasure combined with the pleasure we take in the affection of others. In other words, he expresses the idea, since often repeated, that the motivation of all human actions is some form of self-gratification. In another of the remarks he points out what we today call the paradox of thrift in economics. " . . . to render the generality of a nation lavish, the product of the country must be considerable in proportion to the inhabitants, and what they are profuse of, cheap; that on the contrary to make a nation generally frugal, the necessities of life must be scarce, and consequently dear."

The whole of the remarks is simply a restatement of the moral that without vice there can be only slothful ease and stupid innocence, with no arts or sciences.

In the essay "A Search in the Nature of Society" Mandeville works from the premises that there is no virtue without self-denial, in direct opposition to the prevalent eighteenth century Shaftesburian idea that a virtuous man is one who is without any trouble or violence. Mandeville also states that "what men have learned from their infancy enslaves them, and the force of custom warps nature, and at the same time imitates her in such manner, that it is often difficult to know which of the two we are influenced by." In dealing with the old Greek concept of searching for an absolute good and beautiful, he calls it "a wild goose chase". Later he defies the Shaftesburians and states that "here is nothing good in all the universe to the best-designing man, if either through mistake or ignorance he commits the least failing in the use of it; there is no innocence or integrity that can protect a man from a thousand mischiefs that surround him: on the contrary everything is evil, which art and experience have not taught us to turn into a blessing." In other words he foreshadows the psychological idea of environmental influences making an individual, going almost to the extreme of determinism. He sums up his whole idea of the standards of society in the following statement. "It is in morality as it is in nature, there is nothing so perfectly good in creatures that it cannot be hurtful to any one of the society, nor anything so entirely evil, but it may prove beneficial to some part or other of the creation: So that things are only good and evil in reference to something else, and according to the light and position they are placed in." Thus he reaches into the area of relativism of values, much to be heard of after his death.

Another of his essays is entitled "An Enquiry into the Origins of

Moral Virtue." In this exposition Mandeville states that no moral virtue is natural in human beings. To him the origin of virtue and vice lies in the first statesmen and lawgivers, who flattered men into believing that they were superior to animals. From this basis the ideas of honor and shame were introduced. The whole structure of moral standards then build up by accumulation through the years. Virtue then became a denial of the animal in man, or self-denial, and vice the gratification of self. In other words Mandeville bases his origins of moral virtue on "sagacious moralists (who) draw men like angels in hopes that the pride at least of some will put 'em upon copying after the beautiful originals which they are represented to be."

The one piece of work most often heard of by Mandeville is his "Essay on Charity and Charity Schools". On first reading, it seems to be only a snobbish piece of highhanding of the poor. In it Mandeville states that he does not believe that the children of the poor should be taught the three R's in Hospital or Charity Schools. But he bases his attack on the following premises: "To make the society happy and people easy under the meanest circumstances, it is requisite that great numbers of them should be ignorant as well as poor. Knowledge both enlarges and multiplies our desires, and the fewer things a man wishes for, the more easily his necessities may be supplied." As an example of what he says; a poor boy, brought up like a lordling, but without the money or backing, finds it hard to fit anywhere in the structure of society. A little further in this essay, Mandeville advances the conditioning concept. "Men who are to remain and end their days in a laborious, tiresome and painful station of life, the sooner they are put upon it at first, the more patiently they'll submit to it forever after." Then his idea becomes less a monstrous piece of inhumanity and more a grasp of the socio-economic implications of education.

Naturally there are many grounds on which Mandeville can be criticized today, and could be criticized even in his time. For one thing he accepts the concept of a static splendid society in which many must be poor so that some may live a splendid life. He also gives some credence to the old Golden Age idea of primitivism, though it is not a favorite of his. But the greatest criticism against him lies in the attack on his basic premise of extremely rigorous Christiano-Hebraic moral values. By defining vice as self-gratification and virtue as self-denial, he balances the scale of values outside the reach of human beings. From this he goes on to a form of moral nihilism. He presents a great tearing down and probing into, which itself can only be the beginning of solving of the problem, not a solution in itself.

Mandeville has been called a cynic, sceptic, ascetic, pyrrhonist, and he was a little of each. But his greatness, and his significance ,to the present, lie in his keen mind and clear vision, which managed to pierce through all the outside paraphernalia of the cultural state of his society, and observe it in its bare structure. Thus from his picture we today, can get an idea of society and the philosophy of society. For although civilization has changed since the eighteenth century, the essential characteristics of the human beings that make it up are still the same.

PETER DYCE

# METAMORPHOSIS-SIX YEARS.

Eric saw no specific purpose in life other than the one he must make for himself. Within the almost stifling compulsion of conformity, (fostered by the question "Why"), he realized that he could accept various beliefs with equal sincerity; although, basically, he was still fastened to the now tenuous leash of circumstance and environment. He was outwardly conformist, seeing his own mediocrity mirrored in the face of his every companion.

He was interested in liberalism, Byron, Shakespeare and the polemics of his English teacher. He saw and appreciated in this English teacher, a combination of the rebel and the scholar . . . . . a quality rare in teachers. He would always remember how this man, deriving an ideal life from his immersion in literature, stood before the class and denounced gumchewing maids who sat on crowded streetcars reading twentycent romance magazines . . . . . then he talked at length about the similarity between mechanized robots and modern man.

Eric was a liberal because he had read that liberals were people who were not rich, and he was not rich, although he wanted to be. As long as he was poor, he would be a liberal. But what would happen if he became rich?

He accepted God largely out of a severe, personal need after long hours of thought in darkened rooms . . . . . as the city slept. This fear allowed no room for the consideration of war, pain, poverty and other religions. Why should he accept one particular creed while others existed? Was this to imply that his beliefs were unequalled in their perfection? The quest for omniscience staggered his imagination.

But his growing awareness of the uncertainty of life produced conflicting thoughts in his mind, at once confusing him and clarifying a personal desire to erase this apparent plurality of self.

*Scene '52*

*Sunlight streaked diagonally through muckspattered windows where boys madly jitterbugged to "Runnin' Wild".*

*"C'mon Johnny, do the rubberlegs", one screamed across the room at a pimplefaced youth dressed in a toobig suitjacket, peggedpants and doublebuckle shoes.*

*"To hell with you guys! All ya ask me to do is jitterbug. I get tired ya know. Why don't ya learn yerselves and then the chicks will be after ya. Last Wednesday, I danced with every chick in the place, ask Keith . . . . . rubberlegs, splits, everythin'. Eric, why don't ya teach 'em the Charleston? It has some real jivey footwork in it".*

*"Look Johnny, the Charleston is no longer hep. These guys are after the latest, and you know I can't jitterbug", Eric countered.*

*The boys surrounded Johnny, pleading with him to teach them to jitterbug. Eric stood back from the group and listened to their entreaties. He was one of them, yet he was not. He felt he could be one of them. He wanted to dance. He thought "Runnin' Wild" was hep. But he wanted to do other things. They only argued about the shape of legs and the brand of cigarettes. What did they know about liberalism, Byron and Shakespeare? But he musn't be a snob, because rich people were snobs, and he wasn't rich.*

*But where could he find a set of values which agreed with his thinking? Did this set of values reside within any one group, or was it disseminated throughout all groups. On this basis, he couldn't accept any group.*

*. . . . . the needle was scraping against the titleplate of the record.*

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The dissatisfaction growing out of uncertainty hastened his acceptance of intense convictions in a false world of absolutes. He would cast off this vague God which produced a doubleman. He

would spit on this empty earth of bourgeois morality, convention, dollar signs and shiny autos. The falseness and hypocrisy of it all disgusted him.

*Scene '54*

*The sudden searingwail of the jazztrumpet intermingled with the staccato poundofdrums ripped through the smokehaze of the audience.*

*At a corner table, Eric sat deep in conversation with a friend. Both were oblivious to the noise around them.*

*"You and your gods, your petty nationalist devotions, your smug little suburbias, your conceptions of success and your narrow minds. To subsist in this way, in your one square inch of universe, is to be a living corpse.*

*You work every day, saving your little dollars, buying your little houses and piling your thousand, screaming kids into your little shiny cars for week-end trips to your summer cottage. When you're fifty, the company will give you a bonus, a shiny new watch, and everybody will say how clever you were saving your money, and how they'll miss you at the company."*

*His friends starts to interject, but Eric cuts him off with a wave of his hand.*

*"Then you and your wife will go on a trip to Europe and you'll write to your kids at college and tell them how dirty France is, and how you'll die if you stay any longer. You'll mention how much you miss the little house, and the minister, and good old Canada. By and by, you'll return with little bottles of French wines for all your friends and you'll show them all your souvenirs, including the little gleaming statuette of The Eiffel Tower. The newspapers will all mention that you've just returned from abroad, (The Continent, they'll say), and people will think you're so cosmopolitan . . . . . It turns my stomach!"*

*"I, lowly Babbit, am most honoured to be financed to a beer with the great Dedalus", his friend puts in with mock humility, "but the great Dedalus has a warped mind. The life which you have pre-*

*dicted for me . . . . and I thank you most kindly, has been cut and tailored somwhat, to fit your own very limited wit. I understand the implication of what you say, but really, it is rather worn out . . . . this classical exposition on values by an aspiring artist to his very bourgeois friend. The trouble wth most artists is that although they may rise above dull reality in their creations, they cannot maintain this aloofness. Eventually they return to the mass, cutting and hacking viciously at it. I have named you Dedalus, most wrongly. I should think that even the life which you have just described, would be most desirable to you in your present situation."*

*"But I don't want this petty life. To me experience is life . . . the more experience, the better the life. The man who can break out of this stifling existence in order to submerge himself in other cultures amongst other peoples, is the successful man. On my deathbed, I want to be able to say, 'By God, life has been all right! I have lived fully'."*

*"Bravo! But your conceptions are completely wrong", his friend interjected with a smile.*

*"But to me, these conceptions are right. I merely tell you what I think. The trouble with you and your type is that you not only think you're right but you feel everybody else should think the same way. What you want is a world of little, orderly, uniform men, all thinking and acting in the same way. Ha! What have I accused your world of? The thought of anything else is alien to you, and makes you quake in your respectable little cage".*

*. . . . . the dancers moved in wildabandon to the jazzmusic.*

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Eric's self-given role gradually acquired a pretentious gloss He saw in himself one who denied reality more for the joy of denial, than an attempt to lay the framework for a reconstruction. The self-assertion derived from denial was much like a Hallowe'en mask. Sooner or later it must come off. It could never be worn at Christmas. Besides he was not the member of any lost generation spewing invective from without. If he was to be heard, he must speak from within society.

His absolute conceptions of right and wrong gradually gave way to extreme reversals. To seriously propound a relative value required much consideration, but to insist on the absolute was a con-

fession of either omniscience or idiocy. He must lose this superficiality of character, by acquiring more depth and understanding. He saw hate in itself as a childish passion more akin to temporary rage than to understanding. But to deny emotion was to deny human frailty.

What exists in space and time, can never rival the perfect, preconceived idea. Society would never exist ideally. Absolutes exist solely in the mind, and should not be glued to reality.

Thus, Eric would neither completely accept nor reject anything. He would live in the apparent world, with a mind fully receptive to change and the pragmatic courtship of ideas. The difficulty would lie in the need for a constant readjustment. Could this need be fulfilled?

*Scene '56*

*Smearedred cigarette butts lay immersed in amoebalike slops of coffee on arborite covered tables. Flashes from rosered neonlights, onandoff, mixed with the pusyellow glow of the coffeeshop. Two men sat chatting at a corner table.*

*"What are you going to do when you finish school, Eric?" The man asked.*

*"I want to write. But I'll be damned if I starve", Eric answered.*

*"Writing's all right I guess. But how do you propose to do it without starving?" The man asked.*

*"Well, I'll probably get a job teaching and write on the side", Eric continued. "Whatever I do, I want it to fit my interests. I'm mainly interested in studying, but not to the point that I'd subordinate life to it. I guess you could say it's my hobby. But sometimes, I get the idea I know so damned little. I'm convinced that the more you know, the less you know . . . Let's go . . . the waiter wants to clean up."*

*The two men put on their coats, paid the cashier, and strolled out the door.*

*"Well, we'll see you tomorrow, Eric."*

*"Yep, tomorrow . . . . . another day. Goodnight".*

*Both men disappeared into the night.*

JESSE NISHIHATA

# WANDS ACROSS DARK ROOMS

*"A capital ship for an ocean trip*

*Was the Walloping Window Blind . . ."*

The room became surcharged with the presence of conviction, and the storm tossed anguish, only a moment before wild in terror, a shipwrecked despair crowned on the lighthouse claw of dawn breached stolidity... Derek had been up all night. No more the mute witness of the walls: he padded to the window and sprung the blinds — the world was light enough. And it glowed.

Certainly, that was it! The trance of the naked trees to the sky was an etchwork eye sheltering a birdnest... the upward rush of roots. The chiaroscuro of dream green landscape was lightened and wafted away in the morning glory breeze. The blinds nudged gently with it. Derek stirred from his gaze and slowly lighted a cigarette. It was like a sludge.

He was back again with that blue summery day splashed October on the grazing land felt and keened on the slopes of Mount Royal. He remembered the city lost in the distemper of the day, and from his perch on the crest of the sky only the shoulder haze of far mountains could be seen. The chestnut of air was thumping in his nostrils. It had suddenly felt good to be part of things: he whacked his copy of Confessions of St. Augustine on his thigh and roughly thumbed it through. A random passage fell out: "There are men who go to admire the high places of mountains, the great waves of the sea, the wide current of rivers, the circuit of the ocean, and the orbit of stars — and who neglect themselves..." Then Derek

had been in worse temper with himself realizing that he had pitched his tent in that vernal verbal jungle: how green are the springs that must flow in the red wine of . . .

And then, as if from that moment, the indifferent earnestness of lecturers in philosophy (following Kant, what?), English (and what about George Crabbe?), had become a hostile personal involvement; and the fact and fiction of himself, an embroilment of heat and passion that was too easily fed. What in all finality was the ascendency of values? What had been was surely not enough: "A moment is not a lifetime. Time can stop for us, but not for long. Emotion can make the heart stand still, but it cannot prevent the guard blowing his whistle. Already, tomorrow is on its way, bringing its trivialities and its inescapable strain . . ."

But it was too easy to perch himself on the lecture stand and drone away on concepts and methods effective for the modern mind. It was too easy. The identification had become too strong: Mister Chips must now be Mistah Kurtz. Yes, Professor Derek Brown . . . of — what would it be? Modern literature? Greek? or, maybe, Byzantium culture? Yet, the sly wrinkles of his mentor, Dr. Purvis, had changed to a shaggy concern for his small sphere of intellectualism collated from the morning journals.

And now, after all, should there have been that need to ponder, to bridge the gulf between other inanities? Even the cold weight of deliberation has the anxiety of a lost function.

Derek pursed his lips: his forgotten cigarette expired in a train of ashes. The trembling of the blinds ceased as his hands dropped to his sides. The light crept up.

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Derek Brown was a young man. He was always the young **man;** no instinct will survive in him younger than those his grandfather told him would fit his station. In a sense it had to be so. In his teens he was old, in his twenties he is young. "Heartaches", "Peg O' My Heart", "Opus One", had all escaped him. He knew only the foolish things. A faint morning kiss from his mother who left for that hour while he lay on his bed, a tangled bush of roses his father neglected to care for after that hour, a sense of estrangement from himself since that hour . . . And, a fear of meeting himself in some strange, forgotten room; perhaps, a waiting room in a railway station.

Old man Murdoch knew him well, in a grandfatherly way, but he had entered too late for Derek. Fourteen years old; and the proud head crowned by a thatch of white grizzled by a pair of

gnarled hands felt the youth in his days coming too late, and together they faced their season of deception.

It started with the summers of windblown hills where the songs were easy to sing. And there, where the seasons melted in the tumble of young and old, the rush of days met the hills of time. With it came the decision to enter the University. Grandfather stayed in the elbow hills of Sutton, and Derek entered the city. All was well. The fit care for the blood to the breeding saw a dream of growth and sureness; and when Murdoch died with Derek at his side, there was a smile on his lips.

The dream moulded lost its form on the graveyard by the hills, and open in the autumn sky the silence of the clouds pressed by. Perhaps for Derek the meaning of longing started there in the unlimbered shallowness of the hills. The tree was gone and an epitaph gazed a solemn eye... Crouched in the patrimony of the Murdoch estate, Derek knew the amplitude of time. It would see him through his school years and beyond.

Yet in the vacuous circles of talkers at the Shrine and frathouse occasions, a pocket of vacuum sucked the air, now and then: they said he was free, cut from all ties, and certainly, lucky. Now, he could develop values for his own living, they said. He laughed with them, and was afraid. But he was always alone in his room...

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Transition from time into space is a simple matter when the footprints could be followed in the snow. But the posturings soon become inadequate, and Derek, ringing circles in the wide circumference of experience, sought for himself the higher ground; the better to look up. Arching his lank body he could see the ships in channels of the sky, trailing wistful smoke: and in the evenings, the moon seemed clearer from the higher hills.

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In the arcade of arboured thoughts leading to and from the college grounds, each moment of action was a whispered consultation. But whom to disclose it to? Trained minds brought out a trained answer: each a matter of the common denominator. Only a gesture seemed unique, but it, too, was studied — too studied.

Then, a uniform mass of footnoted knowledge, dusty with references, blessed by the sheepskin key, moved in galatial pomposity to success. Each fitted armour for life, tight, hamhocked, and cheek by jowl. O! flush of youth — it was happiness, radiant and comfortable, always arching the blue transgression of the skies.

The procession veered down the avenue of hope and basked on the fields of praise.

Yea! Yea! Yea!

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Darkness fell slowly in the evening. It was May.

Derek threaded his way though the busy downtown streets, and headed for his rooms. Deliberations in a bookstore and a paperbound copy of Poesies Choisies of Paul Valéry was his. He would enter the pages quietly, later in the evening. Himself was his alone: but now the tomorrows were resounding in their insistence all too fearfully, and he hated the abstractions of his thoughts.

However slow it was, the funnelled gyrations drew him into going. The stammerings of the previous night had given him that conviction to **know** where he was going. Of course, he was going to write, and he suddenly pictured the verbal landscape. The recognition was complete: he knew the lay of land. It was almost as if he had arrived there. But here on this side of the journey, the icewater of initiation was exhilirating. The early footworks are always the best: in the emotion of the early cry born in the last great echo — Derek stumbled. It almost robbed him of the wish to go.

Later that evening Derek began. But soon he interrupted himself to open Valéry — a passage stung him; it was from **Cimetière Marin:** "O mon silence! . . . Edifice dans l'âme

mais comble d'or aux mille tuiles, Tôit!"

The voyage had begun!

MORTY CONSTANTINE

# A SHORT VIEW OF CANADIAN MUSIC

The three things that Canadian music needs, as does music the world over, are business organization, public good-will, and composers to write new music. It is upon these factors that the survival and future development of Canadian music depends. These are the panes in the window through which we must look out on Canadian music.

To date, many admirable enterprises have been launched. There are many competent composers; there always seems to be good material available (if not the proper facilities to develop it); but without public response, all their energies are doomed to failure. We read of good composers with exciting ideas for symphonies and the like, but the backers are not impressed. We read of flourishing concert seasons failing, because there are no new compositions being written. Twenty-six concerts consisting of music by Canadian composers were relayed to France by Radiodiffusion Français, in the 1946-1947 season, but they had to be discontinued because there was not enough good music available.

The CBC is by far the greatest single performer and user of music in Canada, and is aware of its responsibilities to Canadian composers. One will often hear people remark that a certain composer is familiar because the CBC has made him so.

Within Canada, the CBC has given many broadcasts of Canadian works, many of them first performances. The CBC has also commissioned, and produced for broadcast, extended works, and throughout the year it engages, for periods ranging up to three or four months, some twenty-five composers to produce incidental, or the principal music, for its broadcast performances.

Let us now examine the composer and Canadian music. There is a definite search towards something new. It would seem, that we are developing towards maturity. Some of the older composers are clinging to the style to which they are accustomed. (There is a twelve tone school in Toronto). There is still some heritage from Debussy and other composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. But more and more, Canadian composers will be writing in the style of Stravinsky, Bloch, Britten, Bernstein, Berg, Bartok and Schonberg. We are writing music as advanced as any other country in the world, although not all Canadian composers are committed to avant-garde ideas.

Since the CBC is aware of its responsibilities, and there is a definite search among composers, what is hindering us?

The restriction involved in writing for the CBC is one of a physical nature, not peculiar to Canadian music; that is, the composer who writes a violin sonata has a better chance of having his work performed than the one who writes a symphony for one hundred instruments. This however, is not the only reason.

The number of symphony orchestras in Canada is negligible. Orchestras worth mentioning are in Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver and Montreal. If we were to break this down further, we would be left with one... the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. To add to this helpless situation in Canadian music, we find that on numerous occasions, guest conductors appear at the baton. This is, on occasion, well-received by most of the concert-going public. But what about our own composers and conductors? We find such people as Munch, Fiedler, Reiner, Monteux and Stokowski conducting Canadian orchestras. This would seem a more serious restraint on our music than most people care to realize. When a guest conductor appears, he brings along his own program. This includes everything except Canadian music. **The Canadian Conductor** is the medium through which Canadian music will be performed.

On October 16, 1953, a concert of Canadian music was held at Carnegie Hall in New York. This very occurence would seem to point to our lack of confidence in the Canadian composer's ability to compete on his own merits. The tragedy is not so much the fact that Canadian compositions had to be brought to a small New York audience by design, but that their American success was necessary to stimulate interest and bring about an overwelming response to the same program held in Montreal in February, 1954.

Before examining Canadian music in the light of exhibiting a reflection of Canadian life, let us first scan through the compositions of the more musically advanced countries. In France, for example,

we find that at the end of the 19th century, the music of France was not French.

There arose an awakening to the realization that the Wagnerian form of music did not, by any stretch of the imagination, reflect the French temperament of the time.

Jean Philippe Rameau and Franois Couperier are the fathers of French music. It was they who contributed so greatly to the re-nationalization of French music at the end of the 19th century. A music pure of any foreign elements emerged in France. Within a half century, France had reached perfection in her music, leaving us the works of Ravel, Fauve, Dukas and Debussy.

But it is impossible to speak of Canadian music in the same vein that French music has been discussed. To discuss Canadian music is like saying there is a Canadian language. We recognize French or English Canadians by their accents, their mannerisms, and perhaps, their actions. Canadian music does not now possess a distinguishing factor in its melody or harmony. We do not have a perfected form or characteristic compositions which truly reflect Canadian life. We do, however, have Canadian composers. And we can label their works "Made in Canada" without reference to whether these composers are of French or English origin, or whether they received their education in the French or English conservatories abroad.

Among our more famous composers are Claude Adonai Champagne. Perhaps his best-known work is "Suite Canadienne", written for chorus and orchestra. The piece was first played in Paris. There is a distinct French colour in his "Suite Canadienne" . . . French, by virtue of his source of inspiration, as well as by the make-up of the composer. The Suite is based on Canadian folklore.

Following his "Suite Canadienne", Champagne composed "Filligrane", and a "Prelude for Piano", and in 1929, he wrote the "Piece en Forme de Habanera", for violin and piano. This work contains a rhythm of admirable balance. The music is warm and can be said to be almost perfect.

It is true that increasing pressures from the United States have made their impression on Canadian composers. But those Canadian composers who have learned their craft at American schools, such as Curtiss or Julliard, have returned to influence the Canadian scene.

The argument is often presented in Canada that we will never have a truly Canadian music until the French and English have been fused. This is utter nonsense. Whether a composer is of French or English background is highly irrelevant. Both Champagne's

"Suite Canadienne" and Alexander Brott's "From Sea to Sea" are characteristic of what Canadian music might become. Their works are characteristic of a segment of Canadian life. This is what we must strive for.

SUZANNE BOYER

# SYLVAIN ET SA TERRE

La campagne était calme. Un décor vert, brun et noir s'offrait à la naissance sinueuse d'un chemin racineux et bohème. On entrait chez Sylvain. Du moins, c'est ce qu'on disait à la ronde. On allait même jusqu'à dire que si jamais il fuyait, ce jeune homme emporterait ce coin de terre avec lui. Mais lui, loin de se douter qu'il énervait ainsi le voisinage, errait, des journées entières, comme s'il voulût posséder chaque lopin de terre à la fois.

La terre était rouge de puissance, brune de richesse, et, à certaines places, noire d'intelligence. Sylvain le savait. Il l'avait creusée, plus jeune, morveux et puant; il s'en était même mouché. Il l'avait aussi goûtée, reniflée, humée et baisée. Elle sentait bon les bois, le rêve et l'amour.

Quelquefois, la terre devenait superficielle et offrait le spectacle d'un tapis, d'une verdure jaunâtre, à long poil tirant. Elle se riait toutefois de ces pelouses brossées et taillée. Elle était vierge de tout acier et fière, trop fière de sa parure. A travers les bois, on aurait dit que sa senteur enivrait les jeunes feuillages immobiles, qui, dès lors, pliaient comme vaincus. On était loin de ces forêts plantées commes des forteresses; Sylvain n'aimait pas qu'on l'assommât de puissance. C'était donc à des petits arbrisseaux qu'il contait ses peines et ses joies, car il en avait comme tout le monde. Il aimait ces drôles de taillis, leurs airs de fossés et leur regard franc de face à face; il voulait que ce bras osseux et cracquants le recouvre hermétiquement.

Il buvait les sons de feuilles, cette musique siffleuse et apeurée. Il en connaissait tous les refrains par coeur, Rien ne lui échappait des mystères de ces mélodies. Les veines des feuilles devenaient

parfois tordues et sensuelles; elles se riaient bien de tout puisqu'elles avaient un maître... un protecteur qui les recueillerait dans leur dernière agonie et leur offrirait une sage félicité au beau milieu des pages jaunies d'un volume ancestral.

Par terre, des arbustes miniatures couvraient le plancher verdâtre. Toujours en bataille ces mauvaises herbes qui poussaient sans aucun souci de discipline; les mauvaises têtes... Sylvain leur montrerait bien qui avait raison. Un jour, à bout de forces, elles courberaient, lasses d'une lutte ignorante. Leurs miettes cependant se fourreraient dans le sol, et elles renaîtraient l'année suivante. Sylvain le savait, mais n'y pouvait rien. Sa TERRE n'était que complicité...

(Adapted by)
ERNEST TUCKER

# DIRT AND BLOOD

(a play in one act)

Scene: An old apartment in the slums of Montreal. A young French girl, sickly looking, knocks at the door. There is no answer. She knocks again, quite loudly. No answer is made so she tries the door. It opens. She walks in and looks around. There is an artist's easel holding an unfinished painting. A table with a bit of food and some tubes of paint. In a corner there is an old unmade bed. A cupboard with a few dishes is in the other corner. A dim electric bulb is burning. Around the room there are sketches on canvasses; finished and unfinished paintings lean against the walls. The girl looks around at these. The door opens and an old unshaven man walks in.

**André:** What are you doing here?

**Jeanette:** I came to see you.

**André:** Whatever you are selling I don't want to buy. So get out.

**Jeannette:** I'm not selling and I don't want to buy. I only came to see you.

**André:** What is it you want to see me about? I've paid my rent. Let me alone. Please go away.

**Jeanette:** Not until I get some information from you. (She opens a bag she is carrying and takes out a cigerette. She offers him one).

**André:** I don't want a cigarette. I don't want anything from

you. Now will you go and leave me alone. All I ask is to be left in peace. (He goes to the door and holds it open.) Go.

**Jeanette:** (throwing her cigarette on the floor and stamping on it), I've come to talk to you, damn you. I'm studying art at the University and want to write a thesis on your work, that's why I must talk to you.

**André:** (he stares at her in amazement) Good Lord, will I do for a thesis? I don't believe it. You have to be dead 50 years before you are any good to the professors. (she shivers) Are you cold? I'll make it a little warmer for you. (she lights another cigarette, leaves her bag on the table and looks around at his paintings) The light's bad. I'll light a lamp so you can see better. (she pauses before one painting; he holds the lamp closer) What do you think of it? ( she doesn't answer) What do you think of it?

**Jeanette:** (whispers) It's fearful. It's glorious. You've never painted anything like this before. There's nothing in the collections to touch it.

**André:** It's all wet. The colours will harmonize better when they're dry. (He puts the lamp on the table and goes to the cupboard and pulls out a bottle and a glass. She turns and sits at the table.)

**André:** It's only Roma. I haven't drunk anything else for years. It's the cheapest way of getting drunk.

**Jeannette:** Pour me some. There's things I must forget too.

**André:** A kid like you?

**Jeanette:** Will you show me your other canvasses? I should like to see them.

**André:** (angrily, drinking quickly) There's nothing worth showing. It was only by accident you saw this one. It just happened to be out. (turning on her) What's a mother's darling like you know about pictures? What business have you to come here? You needn't write about me. I want to be left alone in peace to paint. You can write about me when I'm dead, and cash in on the corpse . . . you could never understand me anyway.

**Jeanette:** (quietly standing and walking away) Art is the only thing I live for. Since the war I've had nothing else . . . , art's the only thing that is real. It's more real than life.

**André:** Life's tripe. Go to hell. (he laughs bitterly)

**Jeanette:** (quietly) Does being a genius hurt so much? . . . . .

When I first saw your paintings I could hardly breathe. I was angry, almost furious at first. I was immature then and felt as though you had picked up a handful of blood and filth and thrown it at me . . . . . I always wanted to write about you sometime when I knew how. I imagined myself kneeling to you if I ever met you — childish wasn't it? Then I heard you had drunk yourself silly and couldn't paint anymore. When I was ill and had to start taking a cure for my lungs I thought about you again . . . . . it was then I decided to study art.

**André:** Are you ill?

**Jeanette:** (shrugs her shoulders, walks to the table and takes a drink) But it won't hinder my work if you'll help me.

**André:** You can see for yourself what I'm like. What they say is quite true — I'm a disreputable old drunk. (furiously) But I haven't stopped painting, that part's a lie.

**Jeanette:** I don't think what the rest think. You measure things by a different scale from other people, things like right and wrong— ugliness and beauty; it's not for me to give any opinion of your work, but I think (she turns to the painting) this is the best you've ever done.

**André:** (grins slightly) Have you seen the Hangman too?

**Jeannette:** Yes I've seen it — no one ever painted death with such frightful finality—not in this country anyhow.

**André:** Do you remember his feet? Just his feet? (angrily) No No taste, no style, no subtlety, they said . . . subtlety, they can take it and stuff it.

**Jeanette:** (flaring) And your language is every bit as crude as your painting. Why shout at me? I'm only trying to understand. I want to understand you as well as I possibly can. I'm only drinking your horrible liquor to show you I'm trying to understand you. Don't you yell at me. (she coughs and takes another drink)

**André:** (lamely) I haven't asked for your understanding.

**Jeannette:** Why do you always choose such ghastly subjects . . . . just dirt and blood. Can't you see anything fine, even in death? When you look at the Hangman, you can smell the stench of the corpse.

**André:** (his face lights up) Really? I suppose you rather I painted nice tidy pretty pictures—why?

**Jeanette:** Other people—

**André:** Other people? Well they can do it.....besides it isn't I who choose the subjects—the subjects choose me. (he drinks and sprawls out on the table—she gets up and begins to tidy the place up) If you've seen the Hangman, get out of here before I hurt you. Can't you see it's myself I painted on him? I am a wolf—why do you visit my lair on your own accord?

**Jeanette:** Maybe I'm Little Red Riding Hood. Perhaps I've come to save my grandmother — if there's anything left of her.

**André:** (laughs loudly) you think you're a match for me, do you. You are mad—out of your mind.

**Jeanette:** That's what the professor said when I told him I wanted to write about you. (she coughs and collapses on the chair)

**André:** You're making yourself ill. (he goes over to her. He tries to kiss her)

**Jeanette:** (astoundedly) How could you?

**André:** What are you fooling about like this for. You are sick. Take your clothes off and get in bed.

**Jeanette:** (shakes her head) There's no point to it. You wouldn't remember anything about it in the morning. Besides it's cold in here. (he moves away and takes a coffee pot from the stove. He pours coffee into a stained cup and hands it to her. She sips it, holding the cup in both hands.)

**André:** How are you feeling now?

**Jeanette:** A bit better, thank you.

**André:** I hope I didn't do anything to offend you.

**Jeanette:** No, you only wanted to kiss me.

**André:** I'm sorry, but I'm glad it was no worse. I might be your grandfather.

**Jeanette:** I don't think I'm your type anyway. I'm too thin. You only paint fat women.

**André:** I painted all my life, even before I could read — sometimes it was like a sort of pain—a sense that there was something more in me than just myself, but I couldn't get it out. I had a home once, and a wife and two children, and I painted. I painted prettily and smoothly, even the museum bought some of the things... that's what started me drinking. I used to look at my pictures and say what's the matter with them. I had to get away. I went to Europe and lived there for two years ..... right up to the First World War.

When I had no money for paints I worked among peasants in fields and on the docks. I wanted to paint, damn it—nothing else but paint.

**Jeannette:** But you didn't paint anything for years.

**André:** No, it all stopped, I couldn't paint anymore — and that internal pressure built up and I drank. I'm only telling you this to try and make you understand—I went all to pieces.

**Jeanette:** And then you were divorced. It's possible you loved your wife.

**André:** (angrily) Of course I loved her. There's never been any other woman in my life.

**Jeannette:** (looking about her at the disordered room) From loneliness to more loneliness.

**André:** Why am I telling you all this. (he fumbles through his pockets) My whole life has been nothing but the loosening of threads and ties, but now at last I am free and I'm myself . . . art is the loneliest battle and it is fought against the whole world.

**Jeanette:** What's the good of anything then? Why paint at all? What's the use?

**André:** There you see, you'll never understand. (he gets up and takes her hand)

**Jeanette:** You may hold it if you like. It feels nice now . . . . .
**André**: (wrathfully) So that's what you want?

**Jeanette:** I only meant I wanted to show you some small kindness—you let me see your paintings, you talked to me—I thought perhaps you didn't like me. I felt that, because of your kindness, this was the least I could do . . . to be near you . . . I've nothing else to give.

**André:** A kid like you, and as thin as a rake. I don't like your eyes either, they are far too much alive. (she looks at him) Don't turn them on me. It only makes me angry.

**Jeanette:** Oh what a beast you are—and cruel too. I've never been able to give anyone anything. My own life has been wasted. I thought that perhaps you might like me—you are old, lonely and unhappy. Just the presence of someone else—no more than that. Perhaps I myself need to be near someone. I'm so afraid of dying. When I saw your picture I felt brave. I thought that perhaps there was no death. (she coughs)

**André:** (goes to her and puts his arms around her) You seem

to be really ill. Your hands are much too hot. (she throws her arms around him tightly) You are still young. You'll get well. One oughtn't to feel so desperate at your age, nor so helpless. One oughtn't to let oneself get dirtied.

**Jeanette:** (drawing herself up) Nothing that happens to people can dirty them. They dirty themselves. I'm not hard, I'm not pitiless, I'm clean.

**André:** (stroking her hair) I've talked too much. I didn't know you were so sensitive. I'd be a swine to touch you.

**Jeanette:** Can't you understand?—I must have some purpose in life or else I shall have lived in vain. If I can be a friend to you my life may have been worthwhile. (she coughs for quite a while, then sits straight in the chair. He gets another board and begins to paint a portrait of her) I don't like your eyes. I loathe brown. I can never bring it to life.

**Jeanette:** Now you're painting me, I shall never die. When I am dead, people will be able to see what I was like—to see me as you saw me — more truly then anyone else ever saw me.

**André:** I am painting you to get rid of you. Then I'll be empty again, this will squeeze the strength from me.

**Jeanette:** I love you.

**André:** Nonsense. You don't love me at all. You're simply afraid of dying. Why do you think you're going to die? You're so young.

**Jeanette:** One lung has been treated. Now it has spread to the other. All they can do is operate and my heart is too weak to stand the anesthetic. I'm not regretting it. My only regret is that I'm not a complete person. (she coughs violently). Hold me or I shall bleed all over your floor. (He holds her until she is again composed)

**André:** Now you must be absolutely still while I do some cooking. (he helps her to his bed) Lie still if you can, I'll make something to eat. I tried to paint you out of my system. It's not my fault if you won't let me. (he goes to her and rubs her brow) Don't hunger for life. Life burns our hands and sears the sight from our eyes as nothing else does. It's better to lie still. Sleep if you can.

**Jeanette:** I shan't be able to breathe anymore. Soon no one will want me.

**André:** You're raving (he stands)

**Jeanette:** Touch me, at least. I long for someone to touch me. (he moves away) You're tired of me already. It was silly of me to think I could bring any warmth to your loneliness — you're greedy.

**André:** You're a child who doesn't see. Poverty and greed aren't the same thing. I am poorer than you. Even when you die you will possess all the wealth of life in your eyes and body . . . . . I envy you.

**Jeanette:** I don't understand. (she gets up, coughing a bit) Whatever we shall say, we shall never meet. You're brooding over yourself, I'm brooding over myself. Each of us sees the other as being better off. Neither of us has any pity. I guess I'm foolish because I'm mad about you. I'm busting with love for you, you ugly old man. You horrible, filthy old man.

**André:** Undress then. I see it's the only way I'll be rid of you. (the lights dim and only silhouettes of Jeanette and André are seen)

**Jeanette:** You only want me as you've wanted other women. I don't want it to be like that. I ought to be disgusted and ashamed, but I'm not. Instead I feel light. I'm happy.

**André:** Don't say things like that, it makes me feel a fool. (the lights fade completely — for a few moments there is no dialogue)

**Jeanette:** (agonizingly) Can love be as hopeless, as terrible as this. (She coughs violently for a few seconds, then silence)

**André:** I'm a swine. I've killed you. So young. Such a child. But I didn't mean it. It wasn't on purpose. (the lights brighten; he walks to the table, picks up the bottle and drinks from it) Hell, I didn't mean it. (he goes to his easel, picks up his brush and paints). Hell, I didn't mean it.

# BIOGRAPHIES

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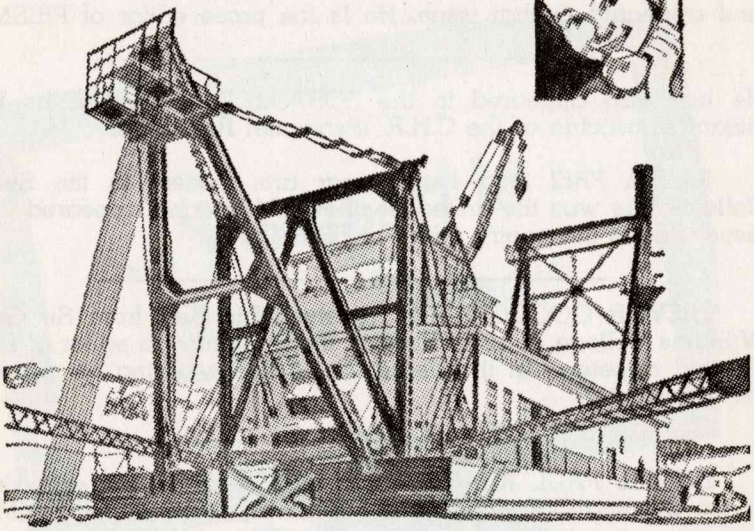

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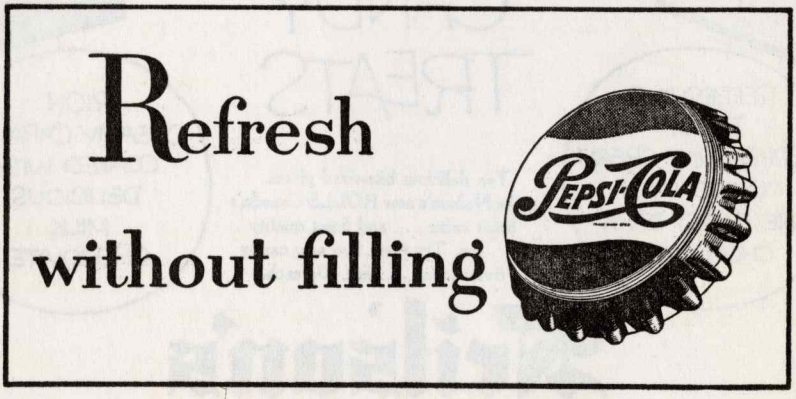

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